

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 10 OCTOBER 2011.

Present – Councillors Andrew Miller (Chair), Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Ellen Glass, Greg McCarra and George Paul (substituting for Danny Logue); Mrs Myra MacPherson and Mr Eric Lumsden.

Apologies – Councillors Jim Walker, Danny Logue and Mr John Hendrie.

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

Whilst HMI reports were available in the public domain, the Chair previously agreed that they should be discussed in private at PDSP meetings as discussions could lead to information being divulged that otherwise should remain private.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Miller declared that he had a child who attended Inveralmond Community High School.

Mr Eric Lumsden declared that he was attending the meeting in his remit as Parent Council Representative and also as the Parent Council Representative for Bellsquarry Primary School.

No objections were received in relation to the above declarations.

PRIVATE SESSION

The Panel resolved that Items 3-6 undernoted be taken in private exempt under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. BELLSQUARRY PRIMARY SCHOOL

In June 2011, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Bellsquarry Primary School. At the time of the inspection the roll was 252, including 56 in the nursery. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 23rd August 2011.

The school had a number of particular strengths:-

- Well-behaved, polite children who enjoyed their learning;
- Staff commitment to the care and welfare of the children and their

teamwork in taking forward school improvement;

- Transitions from nursery into school and from primary on to secondary school; and
- The work with partners to support children's learning.

The following areas of improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority:-

- Raise expectations in all curricular areas of Curriculum for Excellence to match the progress already made in English language and mathematics;
- Continue to develop parental involvement in school improvement and the life of the school; and
- Develop further the planning of children's experiences in the nursery.

Bellsquarry Primary School demonstrated through robust self-evaluation that the school had a clear sense of direction and would be able to progress its work and bring about further improvement. As a result of the good quality of education provided by the school, no further visits would be made by HMI in connection with this inspection. The school would produce a progress report for parents in two years.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the school's Improvement Plan. It was noted on page one of the HMIe Report that "a considerable number of staff changes occurred in the nursery in the past year". This was due to two members of staff being off on maternity leave which coincided with each other. However, this did not have any affect on the continuity of service within the nursery.

The Chair of the Parent Council spoke of their continued support and confirmed that the nursery school continued to promote planning for learning while experiencing significant changes in staffing over the past year.

Decisions

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To endorse the school's improvement plan; and
3. To commend the Headteacher, staff and children on the positive report.

4. BLACKRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

In May 2011, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Blackridge Primary School. At the time of the inspection the roll was 185 including 35 in the nursery. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were

published on 23rd August 2011 in the new style HMle report which was in the format of a letter to parents/carers. The Panel noted that the new format report from HMle did not include evaluations for the school however, the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) advised that this information was available on the council's web site. The Panel requested that in future this information be included in the report from the Head of Education (Quality Assurance).

The report advised that the school had a number of particular strengths:-

- Happy children who were proud of their school;
- Strong pastoral care and positive relationships which contributed to a welcoming ethos; and
- The commitment of the management team and staff to improving the school.

The following area of improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority to continue to improve the quality of education:-

- Improve the curriculum taking more account of Curriculum for Excellence;
- Give children more responsibility for their learning and ensure that activities were purposeful and challenging;
- Improve children's attainment in English and Mathematics;
- Use self-evaluation more effectively to improve the quality of learning and teaching; and
- Involve staff, children and parents more in improving the school.

Blackridge Primary School was confident that the school's self-evaluation processes would lead to improvements in the learners' experiences as confident individuals and successful learners. Support from the local authority would enable the school to make the necessary improvements outlined in the report. As a result of the outcome of the report, HMI would make no further visits in connection with the inspection. The school would produce a progress report for parents in two years as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its school.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the school's Action Plan and highlighted the 'How Well Do You Know Your School' model which encouraged parents and children to be more involved with the school.

The Chair of the Parent Council confirmed their continued support and would continue to encourage parental support to the school.

Decisions

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To note the request from the Panel for Education Officers to include school evaluations from HMle in future reports to the Education PDSP;
3. To endorse the school's Action Plan; and
4. To commend the Headteacher, staff and children on the positive report

5. POLKEMMET PRIMARY SCHOOL

In March 2011, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Polkemmet Primary School. At the time of the inspection the roll was 221, including 48 in the nursery. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 3rd May 2011.

The school had a number of particular strengths:-

- Well behaved, courteous children who enjoyed nursery and school;
- The caring ethos and strong relationships in school to support all children;
- Positive relationships with parents and the community and well-judged use of external support agencies to help meet children's needs; and
- Positive morale and teamwork amongst all staff, including the leadership of the Headteacher.

The report by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) advised that since the report was published the Head Teacher was invited by HMI to speak at the Scottish Learning Festival about the new inspection process. During the course of the inspection HMle found that the Headteacher provided a clear lead for future improvements to the school and was supported in this by her principal teacher.

The following areas of improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority:-

- Involve children from nursery to P7 in planning for their learning and ensure they understand what they need to do to improve;
- Continue to develop arrangements for tracking and assessing children's progress; and
- Continue with plans to take forward Curriculum for Excellence.

Polkemmet Primary School demonstrated that through robust self-evaluation, the school had a clear sense of direction and would be able to

progress its work and bring about further improvement. As a result of the very good report, HMI would make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The school would produce a progress report for parents in two years.

During the discussion an overview of the school's Improvement Plan was provided. The benefits of the Breakfast Club and the Champions in Schools' programme were highlighted.

Decisions

1. To note the terms of the report subject to noting an amendment to page 2; 1st paragraph of the Report by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) to record that the school was inspected in March 2011 and not May 2011;
2. To endorse the school's improvement plan;
3. To commend the Headteacher, staff and children on the positive report

6. INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

In June 2011, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Inveralmond Community High School. At the time of the inspection the roll of the school was 1132. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 30th August 2011. The Panel noted the new style report from HMle and requested an update on the evaluations for the school, which was provided.

The school had a number of particular strengths:-

- Well behaved and polite young people;
- Engagement and commitment of senior management and staff to school improvement;
- Inclusive approaches to meeting the needs to all learners; and
- Promotion of excellence in dance.

The following area of improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority to continue to improve the quality of education:-

- Continue to improve the achievement of young people;
- Develop a clear, whole-school approach to Curriculum for Excellence; and
- Ensure that systematic self-evaluation helps the school to improve even more.

HMle was satisfied with the overall quality of provision in Inveralmond

Community High School. They were confident that the school's actions were leading to improvements. As a result of the report, HMle would make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The school would produce a progress report for parents in two years.

During the discussion the Headteacher provided an overview of the school's Improvement Plan.

Decisions

1. To note the terms of the report;
2. To endorse the school's Improvement Plan;
3. To commend the Headteacher, staff and children on the positive report